

Things In General, Some Things In Particular.

I agree with my brethren that a man should not always preach baptism, nor always preach the supper, nor always preach some other one-point. This would exclude other important points and make him indeed narrow and exclusive. On the other hand a man is not narrow and exclusive who preaches when he feels to preach, on baptism, or some ordinance, or command, or point, not so frequently preached on. I may preach ten, fourteen, or twenty sermons at a place, and one sermon out of the ten, fourteen, or twenty may be on baptism. Now am I narrow and exclusive? I do not believe any true member of the church will say so.

Christ laid great stress on baptism, by example, by command, by linking it with faith. The Apostles laid great stress on baptism, every prominent conversion recorded in the book of Acts is connected with baptism. What Christ and the Apostles did we need not be afraid or ashamed to do.

The question should be, what is our duty? Not, what will other people think? The question should be, has God placed great stress on this? Not, what will other people say? If a man feels it to be his duty to preach on any Bible point, I say, in God's name, let him preach. I will endeavor to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.

Some people will condemn us if we do not preach on ordinances. I preached a sermon on Heaven,* and did not even remotely refer to our practices in which we differ from others. Sister Snader and family are witnesses of this. The same sermon I preached over the coffin of Joseph Firestone, yet somebody with a soul about as big as a three-cent piece went to Harper's Ferry and told my father I was holding up my own church and running down other denominations. I knew nothing of this until father died, and a lump comes in my throat when I think that I had no chance to put myself right. Some will oppose under any circumstances.

Just as sure as we try to dodge an issue or sneak around a point, our opponent will think we are getting weak-kneed or we are playing into his hands. I have had such practical evidence of this fact that I cannot but refer to it, and I emphasize the advice; do not be silent on any point, when you feel to discuss it, because somebody will think or say you place too much stress on that point. Duty is yours; consequences belong to God.

The fact that Christ did not mention baptism in his sermon on the mount, is no argument against preaching baptism. He did not mention the Holy Ghost, yet his silence is no argument against the Holy Ghost.

There is one thing that must be remembered; viz., the abuse of a thing by one party is no argument against the proper use by another party. A man got drunk and with a piece of broken glass cut himself open until his bowels run out. That is no reason why I should do the same, neither is it any reason why I should remain quiet and not use my body.

The G. B's. may have preached feet-washing at funerals, and baptism at prayer meeting, and the communion at weddings, but even if they did, that is no reason why we should not preach on them when we feel so to do. When we see it necessary, when our convictions run in that channel. The G. B's have abused church government, on the same principle, you may give up church government.

There is danger in going from one extreme to the other. Some of you have had too much doctrine; you are running to the other extreme and don't want any. It is best to avoid either extreme and "keep in the middle of the road."

We should be a distinctive church; this is our privilege and duty. On one side we are sending pedos to the Bible, on the other side we are leading G. B's from the swamps of tradition. When we lose our identity our great work stops. Each family should be a family distinct from all other families. Our church should be a church family and accomplish her work.

Before men became "Progressive Christians" they must first become Christians. In other words before sinners can "go on to perfection"

they must first accept "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," men must know them before they will accept them. When I cry out the principles that men may accept them there are usually some around to cry out "He is narrow minded and exclusive." In this way, so was Christ, who came to seek and to save the lost; so was Paul who said: "This one thing I do."

Men and women are ignorant of our views as a church. In one place, a preacher said to me the first night I preached for him, don't preach on doctrine to-night; this community is acquainted with our practices; confine yourself to general topics. I preached on baptism the next night, and a man living near the church and attending my brother's preaching every Sunday, said he never heard a sermon on that subject before, and was convinced that we were right. Another man wanted information on the communion; and another man wanted information on trine immersion; and a man and wife on feet washing; and all in a community where I should confine myself to general topics because the community were acquainted with our practices. In another place a good woman, a member of the church, said to me, There is no difference between us *only* in name. That was pedobaptist ignorance: however it is not all on that side of the fence.

We who read and have accepted the truth deem them undeniable facts, but those who have not considered, and who have not been instructed, do not see them as we do; hence, to them they are *denied* facts, and with others, they are doubtful points, and it is not weakness on our part to clear away doubts or open the eyes of the blind.

Now brethren, you have a few of my thoughts. If wrong, just make it plain, and I will crawlfish most beautifully; but if you can't prove it, I shall most likely tell you of it. In either case "we be brethren."

My position is this, a man should not preach baptism or any other doctrinal point continually to the exclusion of all other subjects; but I also believe a man should be allowed to work in his own sphere in his own way, and if he feels to preach baptism or any other doctrinal point, he has the right to do so, and you have no right to put a cob in his mouth.

JOHN DUKE.

International Sunday School Lessons.

BY REV. FRED HARGREAVES.

Lesson 4.

April 25th.

JESUS AND NICODEMUS.

John iii, 1-18. Golden Text, John iii, 7. Time April 9-16, A. D. 27. Place, Jerusalem. Rulers, Tiberius Caesar, Emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee.

It was in Jerusalem. The capital was now in its glory. The Passover was at hand. Thousands of people were gathering from all parts of the country to take part in the great national festival. The streets of the city were filled with the eager crowds of strangers, and droves of cattle and sheep which were needed for sacrificial use, one hundred thousand lambs alone, besides thousands of sheep and oxen, being required. The Temple already 46 years in building, and not yet completed, shone out in magnificent splendor. Its marble walls and golden roofs gleamed in the sunlight. Its massive pillars, lofty arches, and long marble arcades, its glorious gates of silver and gold, its courts paved with costly stones, all the wealth and grandeur of that gorgeous structure seemed more beautiful than ever in the sunrise of this bright April day. The people were early astir, and all over the city were heard the noises incident to such a vast assemblage of people and cattle. In the Temple itself all was animation. Services were being held in some of the courts, while in others business was being transacted. In the Court of the Heathen where others besides Jews might enter, were pens and stalls for cattle and sheep, to be sold for sacrificial purposes. In one place were the sellers of doves, which were bought by poor women coming for purification. In another place were the tables of the money changers. Every Jew had to pay a half shekel, about 16 cents, yearly, as atonement

money for his soul and the support of the Temple. It could only be paid in a native coin, called the temple shekel, and holders of Greek, Roman, and Eastern money were compelled to do business with the money changers, who charged exorbitant rates for the exchange. The scene was one of activity, bustle and confusion. Into it there came a young man of quiet and commanding presence. He surveyed the scene a moment; and filled with holy indignation and enthusiasm, he quickly tied together some small cords, and first throwing out the sellers of sheep and oxen, with their property, and then the sellers of doves, He drove the money changers out of the temple and overturned their tables. It was Jesus, the Christ, who had entered upon His life work, and in His Father's house vindicated His Father's cause. Thus brought prominently into notice, it is not surprising that He rallied round Him followers who believed the doctrine which He taught.

Amongst them was a Pharisee, a member of the governing class in the religious world. He was a Rabbi, wealthy, well advanced in years, and one whose support would naturally be desired by one who had simply temporal power and authority in view. His name was Nicodemus. He was favorably impressed with the teachings of the Galilean and, after the crowds of the day had dispersed, he sought an interview with Jesus by night. He opens the interview with a compliment. He supposes that Jesus has come to set up a theocracy, and that every Jew would have a place in it. By virtue of his position he expects a place in the new Kingdom, and he wishes to know what will be required of him. Jesus saw into his heart and thoroughly understood him. He replied with a statement which utterly puzzled his guest. Although Nicodemus must have been familiar with such Scripture as "a proselyte is like a child new born," he cannot understand Christ. He has only learnt externalisms, and is incompetent to grasp the great truth which is here taught him. Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" asked the Savior. Then He proceeds to describe the nature of the Kingdom He has come to establish, the method of joining it, His claims upon those who come to Him, and the eternal reward of fidelity to Him.

The scene closes. Nicodemus slowly wends his way homeward. Hushed are the voices of the thousands in the city. Stilled are the sounds of industry and trade. But, along down the centuries, out into the cycles of eternity there ring the Master's words, "Ye must be born again."

LESSON THOUGHTS.

1. If in doubt, seek light and truth of Jesus.
2. Get rid of your sins that you may enter the Kingdom of God.
3. Christ is the Author of eternal life.
4. It is only by faith in Christ that we can get to heaven.

Gatherings of Gold.

The whole wide world for Jesus!

Through all its fragrant zones

Ring out again the watch-word

In loftiest, gladdest tones.

The whole wide world for Jesus!

We'll wing the song with prayer,

And link the prayer with labor,

Till Christ his crown shall wear.

—*Oliver Crane, D. D.*

If believers are condemned by the world, let them remember that they shall not be condemned with the world.

The true and grand idea of a church is a society for the purpose of making men like Christ; earth like heaven, the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of Christ.

All this magnificent engineering of modern civilization is, when taken by itself, as impotent to rescue man from sin and guilt as the rudest barbarism that ever degraded humanity.—*Dr. P. S. Henson.*

Uction is the tongue of fire, and it is just the very gift which no universities, no degrees, no amount of learning or critical attainment, no cultivation of the science of belles-lettres or rhetoric or elocution can bestow.—*E. Paxton Hood.*